

in, or from the peculiar pattern they choose to wear or to imitate, the degree of cultivation that their minds have received. The refined few consider simplicity the feature of greatest merit in ornament; the trifling, the vulgar, and the ignorant, prize only what is striking and costly—brilliant in colours and showy in contrast. Nothing can severely or more truly satirise this taste than the fancy of the negro chief in the interior of Africa, who received an Englishman's visit of ceremony in a drummer's jacket and a judge's wig.*

To acquire true and settled notions of beauty, those works which have been admired by the most enlightened, and which have stood the test of time, must be studied, and kept constantly before the sight. The best specimens of the best masters must be repeatedly inspected. No correctness or certainty can be arrived at without abundant experience of their merits. The critic should remember that knowledge and taste are progressive: to be reached only by great labour and by an unceasing exertion of the powers of observation, comparison, and reflection on that which is universally allowed to be most perfect.

F. L.

THE PECUNIARY RESULT OF MODEL HOUSES FOR THE LABOURING CLASSES.

MR. H. ROBERTS has drawn up a statement to be added to the report of the General Sanitary Congress, recently held in Brussels, which proves the success which has attended the model houses, and the encouragement they afford to a general adoption of the principle on which they are established, viz. that of providing for the working population healthy and convenient abodes, to be let to them at such rents as will return a fair rate of interest on the amount of outlay, after the payment of all current expenses.

The first range of dwellings built by the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes was the "Model Buildings" near Bagnigge Wells, for twenty-three families and thirty aged women, with two small wash-houses used by the tenants. On these buildings, commenced in 1843, and occupied in 1845, the sum of 5,325*l.* was expended, besides 1,045*l.* paid for the land. The rents received average 391*l.* per annum. The taxes and current expenses, exclusive of repairs, are 63*l.* per annum, leaving a return of about 4*l.* 33 per cent. on the cost of the buildings, and of 4 per cent. on the cost of the land.

Their second range of dwellings was the Model Lodging-House for 104 single men, in George-street, Bloomsbury, commenced in 1846, and occupied in 1847: the cost of this building was 4,289*l.*; the cost of the furniture 936*l.* and 1,200*l.* was paid for the land. The receipts from the lodgers, at 2*s.* 4*d.* per week, amount on the average to 614*l.* per annum. The taxes and current expenses, exclusive of repairs, are 305*l.* per annum, leaving a return of about 5 per cent. on the cost of the building and furniture, and 4 per cent. on the cost of the land.

Their third range of dwellings was the Model-Houses for fifty-four families, in Stratbam-street, Bloomsbury, commenced in 1849, and occupied in 1850. The cost of this building was 9,860*l.* the land being rented at 50*l.* per annum. The rents, since the addition of six tenements to the forty-eight originally provided, are at the rate of 745*l.* per annum. The ground-rent, taxes, and current expenses, exclusive of repairs, are 235*l.* per annum, leaving a return of 5*l.* 75 per cent. on the amount of outlay.

Their fourth range of houses was the "Thanksgiving Model Buildings" in Portpool-lane, Gray's-inn-lane, built in commemoration of the removal of the cholera. They were commenced in 1850, and occupied in 1851. Dwellings are provided for twenty families, and 128 single women. There is also a public washhouse for the use of the neighbourhood, fitted with thirty-four tubs, and on the basement floor a depository is formed for huxters' goods. The cost of these buildings was 9,500*l.* exclusive of 1,700*l.* paid for the

land. The amount of revenue derivable from the whole cannot yet be stated, owing to the time required for bringing into full operation the washing establishment and the huxters' depot. The house for single women has also filled more slowly than the family houses, although each woman pays only one shilling per week for half a furnished room.

In addition to these four ranges of new buildings, the Society has taken on lease, altered and adapted, two piles of old dwellings. One in Charles-street, Drury-lane, to accommodate eighty-four single men, at an outlay of 1,163*l.* The receipts from the lodgers, at fourpence per night, average 415*l.* per annum: the rent, taxes, and current expenses, exclusive of repairs, amount to 222*l.* which leaves a clear return of 17 per cent. on the amount of outlay.

The other old building altered and adapted by the Society is a lodging-house for fifty-seven single women, in Hatton Garden. This house, on which 1,045*l.* was expended, is let as a depot for female emigrants, at a fixed rent, returning 7*l.* per cent. on the outlay.

The total expenditure on the six buildings above described, with the furniture of the lodging-houses, is 31,118*l.* and on the land or site of three of the buildings is 3,945*l.*; the net return, exclusive of repairs, from those fully occupied, being at the rate of about six per cent. on the buildings and furniture, and of four per cent. on the land.

In reference to the outlay on repairs, the experience of the Society shows that, taking new and old buildings together, and including the furniture, an average expenditure of 3 per cent. per annum is sufficient.

In the Streatham-street and Portpool-lane model houses a fire-proof principle of construction has been introduced. This important object is effected by arching the floors and roofs with tubular hollow bricks, slightly wedge-shaped, 6 inches deep, 3*l*/₂ inches wide, and 3 inches thick, set in cement; the rise of the arches being from 2 inches to 1 inch per foot on the span, which varies from 7 feet to 10 feet 6 inches. The arrangement of the buildings renders the floor and roof arches a continued series of abutments to each other, excepting at the extremities, where they are tied in with iron rods, 3 inch diameter, secured to cast-iron springs. The roofs are levelled with concrete, and asphalted. The extra cost of this fire-proof construction beyond that with the ordinary combustible floors and roof, but little exceeded 4 per cent. on the entire cost of the building.

Improved or model houses for the working classes, erected by voluntary associations, are gradually rising in the metropolis and in other parts of England, as well as in Edinburgh; and with the enforcement of the recent Act of Parliament for regulating lodging-houses, cannot fail of producing a most beneficial and much needed change in the domiciliary condition of vast numbers of the working population.

BUILDING AND OTHER WORKS IN AMERICA.

New York Building Mania.—The extent to which building operations are at present progressing at New York, is something quite extraordinary, according to the *New York Herald*, which is giving a series of articles on the subject, enumerating long lists of the more prominent buildings in progress. In Sixteenth Ward alone, it appears, over a million of dollars are being expended in building; and more than four millions in Eighteenth Ward.

"In Sixteenth Ward," says the *Herald*, "the spirit of improvement has arrived at its zenith: the number of houses building in this ward is incredible, particularly in the neighbourhood of Fourteenth and Twenty-third streets. Here some magnificent dwelling-houses are being erected. The material used for fronts in these streets is principally brown stone. The fronts of some houses are beautifully cut and ornamented, while others are plain, without any ornament whatever. We noticed several houses with white marble fronts in Twenty-third-street, but they are neither as handsome nor as costly as the brown stone ones in that street. In various other parts of this ward the houses, which are built by speculators for tenement purposes, are constructed in the cheapest manner

possible. There are at present two lines of rail-roads in this ward, which occasion, in a great measure, the bustling and business-like appearance of this portion of the city." "Eighteenth Ward is one of the largest wards in the city. It is impossible for any person, not well acquainted with it, to form an idea of the extent of building operations in this ward. The amount of capital invested, and the number of men employed, is almost incredible. In the neighbourhood of Thirty-third-street and Second Avenue the houses are all cheap tenement buildings. In the 'upper-ten' portions the structures are upon a grand scale: the cutting of the brown stone in a great number of these houses is superb, and the painting of their interiors exquisite. Another great feature of these houses is the expensive mantle-pieces used in the parlours and basements, which in some cases cost from twelve to fifteen hundred dollars. Above Fourteenth-street everywhere you go your ears are assailed by the noise occasioned by blasting rocks, which is often performed in a very careless manner. The favourite material for constructing fronts is brown stone: there are a good many white marble fronts, but they are plain, and not so handsome or expensive as the brown stone. From the nature of the white marble used it is incapable of ornamental carving. The styles of architecture are so mixed and varied that it is impossible to describe them."

The Manhattan gas-works, from which the city is partly supplied, took fire lately, and created a sudden commotion in theatres, concert-rooms, hotels, and other places, by the extinction of the lights. Property at the gas-works to the extent of 40,000 dollars is said to have been destroyed.

Washington.—The local correspondent of the *New York Herald* reports that, "the marble walls of the new Capitol are raising their bright white faces in the sun's light. The admirable plans of the United States' architect, Mr. Thomas W. Walter, are being handsomely and faithfully executed under the masterly direction of Capt. Samuel Strong, of New York,—the most famous of your Hiram Abiffs. The designs of Mr. Walter for the extension of the Capitol seem, upon the closest scrutiny, to be the very best that could have been originated. They are faultless." Everything is either superlatively good or execrably bad with our energetic and tempestuously go-ahead cousins of the Transatlantic.

Railway Works.—A letter from St. John's, New Brunswick, of the 25th ult. states that "the provincial government has closed a contract with William Jackson, M.P. for himself and wealthy associates in England, to build a railway across New Brunswick, from Nova Scotia to the United States, at 6,500*l.* per mile, including rolling, and all equipments complete. The province takes stock 1,300*l.* and leaves the company 1,800*l.* per mile. The loan bearing interest six per cent. secured by a first mortgage on the whole road, stock, stations, &c. The road and all equipments to be of the best description, such as the best English roads, and capable of being travelled even at the greatest speed. The survey is going on with vigour. The contract will be signed tomorrow."—A railway traveller in the States complains of being obliged to *bold* his meals at all the stations, and proposes the addition of an eating-saloon to the trains, so that he who runs may eat. The access from car to car on American lines would render the establishment of such a saloon quite practicable. In Germany, it appears, passengers can have a cup of coffee, &c. in their cars whenever they wish it, a place being provided at the end of each for quaffing the beverage.

Electro-Telegraphic.—The last Legislature of Maine passed an Act making telegraph companies liable for errors in despatches, either in transmission or in writing out, to the amount paid for its transmission to its destination, both in and out of the state. In case of unreasonable delay to transmit or deliver, affecting the value of the despatch, the amount paid shall be refunded. Damages for falsifying a despatch, from twenty to one hundred dollars. Operators, agents, clerks, and other officers, are held liable for any fraud committed or attempted by means of a telegraph.

New Invention.—A mechanic of Nashua, N. H. has invented a new method of driving circular saws without an arbor. With a saw arranged as he has it, a 4-foot saw, it is said,

* Walker's "Original" article, "Ornaments."